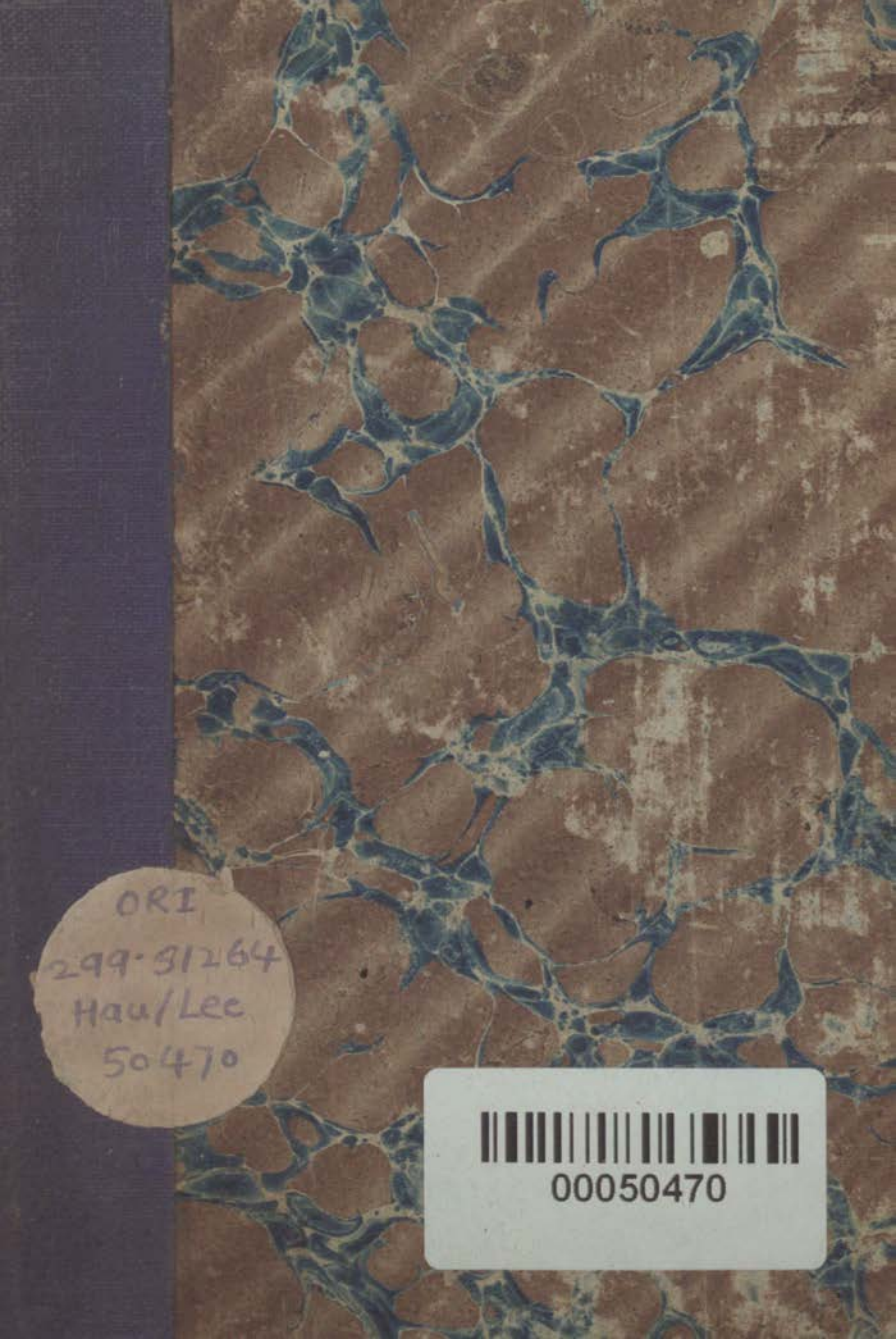
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LECTURE ON CONFUCIUS,

THE SAGE OF CHINA,

DELIVERED AT

THE UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION

Of Western India.

50470

On the 14th October, 1863.

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POONA:

Printed at the Regimental Press,
1st Battalion 4th (The King's Own) Regiment.

1863.

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LECTURE ON CONFUCIUS,

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Among all countries of the whole globe China is one which can boast of a civilisation which goes back to one of the remotest periods of antiquity. It is certainly as ancient as that of Egypt, and doubtless of a higher antiquity than that of Assyria and Babylon. But more remarkable than its early civilisation is its long duration during several thousands of years. The empires of the Pharos and of the mighty rulers on the Euphrates and Tigris have passed away more than two thousand years ago, and left nothing behind them but huge heaps of stones or gigantic monuments, with inscriptions in unknown characters and unknown languages, to bear witness to the existence of once mighty nations and empires. With China the case stands quite different. There we have not only monuments which loudly speak of past greatness, but all the institutions by which the ancient states of China were governed are preserved and still in force. It is, in fact, the only great state of antiquity whose institutions have survived all changes of the times, and withstood all denationalising influences. Though China has been conquered several times, its foreign rulers could not bring about the slightest change in its institutions, or even in its administration. To Europeans, who are only acquainted with Roman and Greek history and that of modern European states,

such a fact appears to be utterly incomprehensible at the first glance. The Romans administered the countries conquered by them in their own way, and this example all European conquerors followed. But no conqueror of China ever attempted at such a thing; for it would have ruined his dynasty in its infancy. The reason of this apparently strange fact, that no conqueror could do the same with China as conquerors used to do with other conquered countries, is principally to be sought for in the peculiar notions which the Chinese, since the most ancient times, have regarding the relationship of the Sovereign to his subjects. The Sovereign, who is often called *Fu-mu*, i.e. father-mother of the empire, is regarded as the Son of Heaven (Tien-tse). He is, in the eyes of the Chinese, nothing more or less than the representative of God himself on earth; but his only business is to keep the ordinances of Heaven, which are conceived to be embodied in the ancient laws and administrations. As soon as he attempts at changing these sacred laws, he ceases to be the lawful Son of Heaven, and the Chinese thinks himself not only quite justified, but even called upon, to revolt against the degenerated Son of Heaven. China has been actually the most revolutionary country the world knows; for, according to Chinese notions, which have been fully approved of and sanctioned by China's ancient sages, the people are called upon to rise against their rulers in open revolt, as soon as Heaven makes known his displeasure unto his Son, by inflicting repeatedly public calamities upon the country, such as famine, inundations, &c.; for such calamities are generally believed to be the consequences of the Emperor's

wickedness. As long as the Emperor is virtuous, and faithfully carries out the decrees of Heaven, the empire will not be visited by any public calamity. The whole responsibility for the moral, as well as material welfare of his people rests with him alone. The Emperors, well knowing the great danger to the existence of their dynasty arising from such public calamities, generally endeavoured to soothe the public indignation at their real or fancied wickedness, by publishing their confessions of great sins, and publicly praying to Heaven for forgiveness. The Emperor is not only the ruler of the whole nation, to whom all must implicitly obey as long as he enjoys the favour of his father who is Heaven, but he is at the same time the high priest, the mediator between men and Heaven. He alone can offer the so-called great sacrifices, viz., those intended for heaven and earth; and in this respect he has about the same position with his nation as the high priests of the Old Testament had with the Jews.

The great responsibility under which every Chinese Emperor knows himself to be, has always acted as a great check to arbitrary and despotic measures, and made the Emperors entirely dependent upon their great officers. In order to discharge well the duties of his high office, the emperor ought to be, according to the Chinese notion, the most virtuous, most wise, and most learned man of the empire; and, in fact, in the most ancient times, the Emperor used to nominate the most virtuous and wise of his great officers as his successor. This act of election was called the presentation to Heaven. These ancient Emperors, such as *Yaou*, *Shun* and *Yu*, who had been chosen

from the ranks of the great officers by the Emperor, live in the Chinese history as unattainable patterns of virtue, and are thence called the "Sage Emperors" (Shing-wang). They are regarded as the rulers of China during the golden age. Their history is less mythical than one might expect from the remote antiquity in which they undoubtedly lived. The Chinese have a regular chronology, and historical records going back to the remotest times. The ancient historical record the Chinese possess commences with the Emperor Yaou. He ascended the throne about 2330 B.C. He reigned for about seventy-three years, and nominated Shun, who had been formerly a farmer, and for a long time assisted Yaou in conducting the government as his successor. Under the reign of Shun a great inundation took place, which is generally called "The great flood." One of his great officers (Yu) was charged by the Emperor to dig channels, in order to have the land drained and cleared. He nominated him his successor. Yu ascended the throne in the year 2201 B.C. Since his time the imperial dignity became hereditary, though he had not nominated his son successor, but the worthiest of his officers. The nobility, however, acknowledged his son; his dynasty is called that of Hia. It reigned till 1765 B.C., when Heaven withdrew his favour, and Tang, the most energetic and virtuous man of his time, ascended the imperial throne. His dynasty is the "House of Shang." After it had degenerated, it was overthrown by Wu-wang, 1121 B.C., the founder of the dynasty Chow, which reigned for nearly one thousand years. Wu-wang reorganised the whole empire; he established five hereditary dignities,

that of Emperor, Duke, Marquis, Earl, and Baron: besides these hereditary dignities other dignities were established, which were attainable alone by merit and wisdom. The Prime Minister had the rank of a Duke, the other great officers *(ta-fu)* that of a Marquis, and the scholars of the "first class" that of a Earl and Baron. The scholars were divided into three classes: those of the first class had a considerable income from the state. Scholarship has always been very much honoured in China; almost all Emperors encouraged it, particularly the present Manchu dynasty. Love of learning, chiefly of antiquarian studies, has formed a characteristic of the Chinese mind from the most ancient times down to the present. Owing to this taste for learning, China can boast of a literature more vast and extended than that of any other ancient nation. It is chiefly History, Philology, Philosophy, Politics, Natural History, Fine Arts, &c. A catalogue made of the ancient works of Chinese literature at the commencement of our era enumerates already 13,000 volumes from 600 different authors. How vastly has it increased since that time.

The spiritual centre of the whole of Chinese ideas and notions is that great man who is known to Europeans by the name of *Confucius:* he is, in the eyes of the Chinese, the most perfect human being who ever existed, the incarnation of all virtue, perfection and wisdom, the best and most eloquent interpreter of the laws of Heaven. No sage, who was no founder of a new religion, has ever exercised such a mighty influence over a large nation as Confucius did in China. His doctrines have influenced China during the last 2,400 years, and are up to this day in force.

Happily we possess of this certainly remarkable man more than only fables and vague traditions, as is the case with most of the great men of antiquity; of many incidents of his life we have historical records, and many of his sayings have been handed down unchanged to posterity; moreover, we possess his own works, which also throw light on the achievements of the great sage.

The principal source for becoming acquainted with his life, and principally his genuine sayings, are the so-called *Analects* (*Lun-Yu* in Chinese). This is now one of the so-called four classical books (*Sse-shu*); its Chinese name, *Lun-Yu*, literally means Discourses and Dialogues. It is digested in twenty books, which have separate names, taken from their respective beginning words. The work contains the sayings of Confucius, principally his conversations with his pupils and some great officers and princes of his time, along with several incidents of his life and that of his pupils; with it there are incorporated the sayings of several of his most eminent disciples, and a minute description of the manners and habits of the sage, extending even to such particulars as his dress.

According to the opinion of the learned men of China, the work was digested by the sage's pupils after his death; but from several reasons this opinion is hardly tenable, as far as the present extent and arrangement of the work is concerned. I fully concur in the opinion of Dr. Legge, expressed in the introduction to his edition translation of the Chinese classics, which valuable work I have principally used in the preparation of this lecture, that the work, as we possess it at present, was compiled by the dis-

ciples of the sage about four hundred years B.C. That the book is a genuine record of Confucius' sayings cannot be doubted. We can trace the history of its text as far back as about three hundred years after Confucius' death. The first edition of the text, according to two old copies which were forthcoming, was undertaken by the scholars of the Han dynasty in the commencement of the second century before our era. They did not quite agree. In the year 150 B.C., when a Prince, in Lu, the home of Confucius was pulling down the house of the Kung family, in which Confucius himself had been living, he found in a wall several ancient books deposited, which were written in the most ancient kind of Chinese characters, the so-called tadpole writing (for the strokes used therein resembled the tails of tadpoles). Among them there was a copy of the Lun-yu (the Analects), very likely the autograph of the compilers. The characters were by that time only intelligible to a few people; one of the descendants of Confucius spent much time in deciphering them. It was then compared with the two other copies, with one of which it almost entirely agreed. From these materials the text, which is at present extant, has been prepared. The work has been often commented upon by the scholars of China, and there are almost as many editions, with annotations, of this and other classical works in China, as we have editions, with notes, of the Roman or Greek classics.

Besides this work there are other records of Confucius' life extant. The most important is that by the historian *Sse-ma tsian*, who lived about 100 B.C. His life has often been written by Chinese authors. In the following I try

to give a short sketch of his life (according to the materials furnished by Dr. Legge), mentioning only the principal incidents of it, together with a brief summary of his principal doctrines, according to the Lun yu.

Confucius is said to have been a descendant of the ancient Emperors of China. His genealogy is complete as far back as 1200 B.C.; one of his ancestors, who had been a duke, resigned his dignity, and his family merged, after five generations, according to the law of China, into the people again. Having thus lost their royal titles, they assumed the name *Kung*, which has remained up to this day the name of Confucius' family, which about one hundred years ago amounted to 11,000 male members. One of his ancestors, *Ching kau fu*, who lived between 799-728 B.C., was distinguished by his researches into the ancient poetry of China.

The father of Confucius was Shuh Leang Heih; he was a distinguished military officer and commandant of Tsow, a town and district of Lu, in the present province of Shan tung. Confucius was the son of his old age. When he was past seventy years he married as his second wife *Ching tsai* of the Yen family. She gave birth to a son, who subsequently became the idol of China, the ideal of Chinese humanity. It is of course not astonishing to find his birth adorned with fables and miraculous legends, for this has been the case with almost all great men of antiquity. Chinese legends say that the birth of the sage was announced by an animal of a peculiar species called Ki-lin, which is said to appear when extraordinary happy events are in store. The animal knelt before Ching-tsai, and cast

forth from its mouth a gem bearing the inscription, "The son of the essence of water shall succeed to the withering stem of Chou (the imperial house), and be a throneless emperor." He was born on the 21st day of the 10th month of the 21st year of the Duke Seang, of Lu, (in the present province of Shan-tung), that is, in the year 551 B.C. The name given him by his parents was *Kew*, i.e. hillock, for his mother is said to have prayed on the hill Ni for the birth of a son. This proper name of Confucius has, in the course of time with the Chinese, become as sacred and unutterable as the name of Jehovah with the Jews. No Chinese is allowed to pronounce his name; and in books we find now and then, instead of the character expressing Confucius' proper name, the remark, "the name of the great sage is respectfully avoided." Instead of it the Chinese read *Mow*, just as the Jews read instead of Jehovah always Adonai. Confucius calls himself frequently by this name in the Analects; his pupils speak of him as *Kung Kew*, i.e. Kew of the Kung family. When addressing him, they called him *tse*, i.e. master, philosopher, *tse* being a honorary epithet of every philosopher of great destination. The name Confucius, by which alone he is known to Europeans, is in Chinese Kung-fu-tse, Kung being his family name, and *Fu-tse* being a term of respect conveying the sense of master. The whole means only "the master or philosopher of the Kung family."

Of his early years we know very little; when he was three years old, his father died. In his 19th year he married a lady from the state of Sung, who gave birth to a son; Confucius called him Li, i.e. carp; for, as token of

congratulation on that occasion, his sovereign, the Duke of Lu, sent him a present of a couple of carp. It appears that this was his only son; besides he seems to have had one or two daughters.

About that time Confucius took his first public appointment, very likely from the pressure of poverty under which his family was groaning. He was employed as keeper of the stores of grain, and in the subsequent year the public fields were given into his charge. When conducting the office of keeper of the stores of grain, he said, "My calculations must all be right, and that is all I have to care for." When he was in charge of the public fields, he said, "The oxen and sheep must be fat, and strong, and superior; that is all I have to care for."

It does not seem that he kept for any long term any of these appointments which he despised in his heart, having taken them only out of poverty. He soon turned a public teacher, just in the same way as the Grecian philosophers. He gathered round him a large number of pupils, who, after he had attained to some fame, flocked to him from all quarters of Lu, and the adjacent states. Though the pupils had to pay a fee to him, he never refused instruction to any one who loved to learn, even if he could reward him with nothing but a piece of dried flesh, which was the smallest gift. He taught particularly history, and the rules of ceremony, of which he was considered as the best scholar of his time, expounded the ancient national songs called Shi, discussed the meaning of the mysterious Y-King (a book of high antiquity on natural philosophy and metaphysical subjects, on which already 1100 B.C. a commen-

tary was written), and taught ethics and politics, principally the art of good government. He appears to have given instruction even in music, of which he was a perfect master. It is recorded in the Analects that he could play touchingly and charmingly on the musical stone. On religious topics, principally the decrees of Heaven (*Tien-ming*), he did not like to talk.

In his pursuit of antiquarian studies, principally of history, genealogy, sacrificial customs and music, he made once a journey to the capital of the imperial dynasty, which was at that time in the city of Lu, in the present province of Ho-nan. The means for making this tour of research were provided for him by his sovereign, the Duke of Lu, at the advice of one of his principal ministers. The power of the emperor was at that time almost only nominal; his principal dukes, fourteen in number, were almost independent; besides, there was a still larger number of smaller dependencies. These different dukes, marquises, earls, barons, constantly quarrelled with one another, and barely acknowledged their subjection to the emperor, just as it was the case in Europe during the middle ages. To the emperor nothing was left but formalities, the performances of certain sacrifices, such as that for heaven and earth; the residence of the court was, therefore, the best place to obtain correct information on ancient customs.

Arrived at the capital, Confucius had no intercourse with the court or any of the principal ministers; he had there several interviews with the greatest thinker of his time, with the philosopher *Laou Tan*, better known by the name of *Laou-tse*, who has become the founder of a very nume-

rous philosophico-religious sect, called *Tao-sse*, i.e. followers of reason, rationalists who exist up to the present day. Confucius appears to have been impressed with feelings of the profoundest respect towards Laou-tse, and implicitly acknowledged his inferiority to him.

During his stay at Lu, the imperial residence, he inspected the grounds used for the great sacrifices for heaven and earth, examined the hall of light, built for giving audience to the princes, and inquired into all the arrangements of the ancestral temple. On the walls of the hall of light there were paintings of the ancient emperors from Yaou and Shun (2300 B.C.) downwards. He returned to Lu in 517 B.C.

Soon after his return disorder broke out in his native state. The duke had been worsted by a combination of three of the principal aristocratic families of his duchy, and fled into Tse, the state adjoining Lu on the north. Confucius repaired also thither. Tse was then ruled by a duke, of whom Confucius says (Anal. 16, 12,) that, "though he had a thousand teams, each of four horses, the people did not praise him on the day of his death for a single virtue!" But he had an able minister, who managed the affairs of government well. Confucius was principally struck with the beauty of the music at the ducal court of Tse; it was the music of the ancient sage emperor, Shun, whose strains he heard there. He was so ravished with them, that, for nearly three months, he forgot almost every thing over Shun's music. The duke, of whom the sage had formed such a low opinion, however, offered Confucius the revenues of a certain town for his support; but he re-

fused the gift, and said to his disciples, "A superior man will only receive reward for services which he has done; I have given advice to the duke King, but he has not yet obeyed it, and now he would endow me with this place; very far is he from understanding me." The duke asked him once about good government, and received from him the following reply: "There is good government when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son." After some conversations with Confucius, the duke King of Tse became disposed to give him an appointment; but his chief minister disuaded him from this purpose, saying, "Those scholars are impracticable, and cannot be imitated; they are haughty and conceited of their own views, so that they will not be content in inferior positions. This Mr. Kung has a thousand peculiarities; it would take generations to exhaust all that he knows about the ceremonies of going up and down. This is not the time to examine into his rules of propriety; if you, prince, wish to employ him to change the customs of Tse, you will not be making the people your primary consideration!"

It appears that the opinion expressed in this reply on Confucius was shared by most of the statesmen of his time; thence he was unable to find such an employment as he was wishing for in order to practise his rules of good government. The duke King soon got tired of his philosophical monitor, just as the tyrant Dionysius of Plato, and plainly intimated to him that, as an old man, he could not turn his doctrines to any use. Thereupon Confucius left Tse, and returned to his native state, Lu.

After his return he remained there for about fifteen years (515-501), without being engaged in any official employment. After the flight of the duke, the three principal aristocratic families had been in constant warfare with their ministers. Both parties tried to secure the influence and weight of such a man as Confucius; but he carefully kept aloof from them for a long time; for he regarded both parties as usurpers. In the year 500 the ministers were defeated by the chiefs, and obliged to flee. As soon as the chiefs were the sole masters, and a member of the ducal stem (Ting) had been elected duke, Confucius was offered a lucrative and important appointment, viz., that of chief magistrate of the town of Chung-too.

As magistrate of this town he produced a marvellous reformation of the manners of the people in a short time. He enacted rules for the nourishing of the living, and all observances to the dead. Different food was assigned to the old and the young, and different burdens to the strong and the weak. Males and females kept apart from each other in the streets, &c. The duke Ting was surprised at the marvellous results of Confucius' administration, and promoted him to the office of an assistant-superintendent of public works, in which capacity he surveyed the lands of the state, and made many improvements in agriculture. Soon after he was made minister of crime (minister of justice). According to his Chinese biographers, the appointment of the sage to this office was enough to put an end to crime; there was no necessity to put the penal code into execution, for no offenders shewed themselves. This report is, of course, exaggerated,

and little value to be attached to it. One instance of the manner in which Confucius executed his functions as chief justice is worth recording. When any matter came before him, he took the opinion of different individuals upon it; and in giving judgment he would say, "I decide according to the view of so and so." A father brought once some charge against his son: Confucius kept them both in prison for three months. This proceeding did not please one of the principal nobles of the state, who requested Confucius to order the unfilial son, according to Chinese law, to be put to death. Confucius replied, "When superiors fail in their duty, and yet go to put their inferiors to death, it is not right. This father has not taught his son to be filial; to listen to his charge would be to slay the guiltless." Confucius disliked, on the whole, the award of capital punishment, as we may see from one of his conversations with the chief of the Ki family in Lu. On being questioned whether it would not be the best course for a ruler to kill all bad men for the benefit of the good, the sage answered, "Sir, in carrying on your government why should you award capital punishment at all; let your intentions be devoted only to what is good, and the people will be good." So Confucius has already forestalled the opinions of our philanthropists who are advocating the abolition of capital punishment.

It appears that he was promoted to the office of one of the chief ministers; for we find him taking active measures in strengthening the ducal house and weakening the power of the principal nobles by destroying their forts and castles, which he certainly could not accomplish in his capacity as

minister of crime. He soon became the idol of the people, and was praised in songs.

But, notwithstanding all the marvellous efforts of his administration, he could not keep his office long. The neighbouring princes are said to have become jealous of the increasing prosperity of the duchy of Lu, under Confucius' administration, and tried to sow discontent between the duke and the sage. They sent, for carrying out their intentions, a present consisting of eighty beautiful girls and one hundred and twenty of the finest horses to the duke, who was so captivated by the gift, that he entirely neglected the admonitions of the sage, who, though very reluctantly, found himself obliged to resign.

From this time he led a life of homeless wanderings for thirteen years. On leaving Lu, (in 496 B.C.,) Confucius bent his steps westward to the state of Wei; a number of his disciples accompanied him: he was in very low spirits, and sorely disappointed at all his schemes for making a state happy by practising his art of good government having been frustrated by the loss of his office. The reigning duke of Wei, though he was a worthless man, could not neglect entirely a visitor of such eminence as Confucius by that time was. He assigned him a revenue of 60,000 measures of grain. Confucius left Wei already, after ten months stay, to go to Chin. On his way to this state, he was mistaken for an old enemy of the country, and the people made an attack upon him. The sage, however, remained calm, and tried to tranquillise his pupils by declaring that he had a divine mission. The incident, with his remarkable saying on that occasion, is preserved in the

Analects (9, 5). He said, "After the death of King Wan, was not the true lore lodged in me? If Heaven had wished to let his true lore *(Wan)* perish, then I a future mortal (he lived about 500 years after King Wan) could not have got such a relation to this lore. While Heaven does not let the true lore perish, what can the people of Kwang do to me?" He actually escaped and returned to Wei; after his return, he appears to have sought an appointment at Wei, and the duke Ling, and his wife, the notorious duchess Nan-tse, seem to have entertained the thought of employing the sage; but Confucius' pupils, being much displeased with his intention to take office at such a dissolute court as that of Wei was known to be, he was obliged to quit the state; for a prolonged stay in it might, at that time, have been injurious to his reputation.

He proceeded to Chin; on his way he again came in danger; an ill-minded officer intended to kill the sage. His pupils were alarmed, but the sage remained calm and firm, observing at that occasion, "Heaven has produced the virtue that is in me; what can Hwan Tay (the name of the officer who made the attack upon him) do to me?" This is a second instance whence we may clearly see that he was convinced of his having a divine mission to accomplish.

After about one year's stay in Chin, he returned to Wei; on his way, he was laid hold of by a rebellious officer against Wei, who released him only under the condition that he would not proceed to Wei again; but, notwithstanding this oath, he, nevertheless, returned to Wei. On being questioned by one of his pupils whether it was right

to violate the oath, he replied, "it was a forced oath; the spirits do not hear such!" The duke Ling received him once more with distinction, but did not pay any attention to his lesson, whereupon he left his country again.

He bent his steps towards the state of Tsin (in the southern part of the present province Shan-si; but, after having heard of the violent death of two men of worth in Tsin, he returned to Wei again. Again did he communicate with the duke, but without any effect. At this occasion the duke asked him whether he were conversant with military matters, whereupon he answered, that "he had not learnt military tactics, but the performances of religious ceremonies." In utter disgust he left Wei, and went back to Chin.

After some nine years of fruitless wanderings, he returned again to Wei; the worthless duke Ling had, meanwhile, died, and was succeeded by his grandson, who was at war with his father. The duke wished to secure the cooperation of Confucius, in order that his cause might be strengthened; but the sage declined to take office with him, although he spent from five to six years continuously in Wei.

In the year 483 B.C. Confucius was respectfully recalled to his native state by the chief of the Ke family, who was by that time the most powerful man in the state. The duke appears to have been a mere cipher.

On his return to Lu, Confucius was in his 69th year; wherever he had bent his steps, in order to find a field for practically illustrating his rules of good government, he had met with disappointment. His heart was filled with

sorrow and grief at the disregard and indifference which his lessons had met on the part of the princes.

Only five more years remained to him, which were by no means brighter than the past. Although the duke of Lu frequently conversed with him, he no longer had any weight with him in the administration of government. The philosopher sought solace in literary pursuits; he devoted all his time to the completion of his literary works, which made him immortal. He wrote a preface to the Shu King, or book of history, which had been prepared by him from old chronicles; he digested the rules of ceremonies, which had come down from the ancient emperors; he commented on the Y-King, the mysterious book on the principles of natural philosophy and metaphysics, said to have been revealed to Fuh-hi, the Adam of China; he collected and arranged the ancient poetry, and brought the Shi-King, or book of ancient poetry, into that form in which we possess it at present. He had selected from a very large number of ancient songs and hymns, of a various character, about 311; all those which bore an immoral character were rejected by him, and are actually now lost. It, however, appears that he was not the first who collected them; collections existed already at his time. The first of them was made, as we are credibly informed by Chinese historians, by the first emperors of the Chow dynasty (since 1120 B.C.) The order issued at those early times is even still preserved; it is as follows: "The emperor orders the grand music-master to collect the regular songs, to enable the emperor to examine the manners and morals of his subjects." This remarkable

edict, which had been in force for at least three centuries, became a dead letter so early as 771 B.C., when the power of the imperial house of Chow began to sink. To this order we mainly owe the preservation of many pieces of ancient poetry, some of which go back as far as 1700 B.C. In the present state, this book of poetry, Shi-King, which occupied with the Chinese just the same rank as the Book of Psalms with Jews and Christians, is divided into four parts, a division which appears to have been made even anterior to Confucius; for several of its parts are mentioned by him in the Analects by their present names. The first part is called *Kuo-fung*, i.e. the morals of the vassal states. This part contains the popular songs as they proceeded from the mouths of the people of ancient China. They are subdivided into fifteen sections, according to the various states where they were collected, for there were in ancient China an imperial territory and fourteen larger vassal states. Such a collection of popular songs, which best represent the character of a people, or a particular province, is unparalleled with all other nations of antiquity. Even European nations have directed their attention towards collecting the popular songs of their own countries only during the last twenty years. As about ten years ago Napoleon III. ordered a collection of all popular songs of France to be made, many continental journalists were quite surprised at the novelty of such an idea, without knowing that Chinese emperors, about three thousand years ago, had done the same.

The second and third divisions of the Book of Poetry comprise those odes which concern people of high rank and

standing. They contain praise as well as censure; several of them are bitter satires on immoral acts of high people. The names of these two divisions sound rather curious; they are called "The small rectification (of character) and the great rectification." Both these names correspond to the ideas of Chinese philosophers of a low or vulgar, and a high or accomplished morality.

The last division of the Book of Poetry (*Sung*) is taken up by the sacrificial hymns chanted at the time of performing ceremonies in the ancestral temple. These are, of course, the most ancient of the whole collection. Confucius himself was very fond of poetry, and sought often, in the times of adversity, solace in it. He principally attached a high value to the study of the ancient songs, on account of the high moral sentiments which many of them express. He held that sound poetry is a mighty instrument for forming the character of young men.

About two years before his death he composed a little historical work, called "Spring and Autumn" (*Chun-Tsiu*). It is a chronicle of the states of Lu from the year 721 to 481 B.C., and, in fact, only a continuation of the sage's compilation of the Book of History (from ancient records). To this little work the highest praise is accorded by the learned men of China; it occupies with them the rank of Tacitus. Confucius himself appears to have laid a great stress on this work: for one of his most eminent followers, Meng-tse, (he lived a little more than 100 years after Confucius), reports that Confucius expressed himself on his "Spring and Autumn" in the following manner: It is the "Spring and Autumn" which will make men

know me, and it is the "Spring and Autumn" which will make men condemn me." Meng-tse calls it a work as great in its way as the Emperor Yu's regulation of the waters of the deluge, and adds the following significant words: "Confucius completed the 'Spring and Autumn,' and rebellious ministers, and villainous sons were struck with terror." He awarded praise or pronounced censure according to the strictest laws of the higher morality.

Besides his literary labours, he undertook, after his return to Lu, the complete reform of the music. In disgust at this reform, all musicians, the grand-master of music, the grand-master of the second, third and fourth meals, the drum-master and assistant drum-master left the duchy, as we learn from the Analects.

The last years of his life were much embittered by the severe losses he sustained. Several of his pupils and his son had died; the loss of the latter seems not to have affected him much; for he had little taste for learning and study, and such men were disliked by the sage. When his favourite pupil, Yen-Hwuy, died, the master gave way to the outbursts of the most excessive grief, crying repeatedly "Heaven is destroying me, heaven is destroying me."

Confucius died in the year 478 B.C. in his 73rd year; when feeling that the end of his life was approaching, he is said to have repeated the following stanza:

"The great mountain must crumble,
The strong beam must break,
And the wise man wither away like a plant."

In his last hours he bitterly complained that no intelligent monarch had arisen to make him his master. So he died, but his teaching, though it took effect but slowly, had sown

the seed of China's regeneration, and has made its author the human idol of perfection and wisdom with the people of China up to the present day. Although the contemporary princes took little note of the sage, and were not disposed to listen to his lessons on righteousness, justice, and the art of good government, posterity found almost no limits to honour and glorify his memory. A regular Confucius worship became established in China, at which the emperor himself has to act as high priest. Already, in the year 57 A.D., it was enacted that sacrifices should be offered to him in the imperial college, and in the colleges of the principal districts throughout the empire. At the same time the Chinese began the custom, which has obtained up to the present day, to erect temples to the sage in connection with all the colleges and examination halls of the empire. In these temples the sage is not alone, but associated with his principal disciples, and many others who distinguished themselves in later times as expounders of his doctrines. So we have in China a regular worship of genius, with the attempt at which the men of the French revolution startled Europe as with an unheard of novelty. But it was, in fact, nothing new, as little as the socialist theories of Proudhon, which perverted the heads of Chinese thinkers more than a thousand years ago.

At the imperial college at Peking the emperor himself acts as high priest of Confucius; he offers libations to the manes of the sage, and invokes him to appear in the following words: "Great are thou, O perfect sage! Thy virtue is full; thy doctrine is complete. Among mortal men there has not been thine equal; all kings honour thee.

Thy statutes and laws have come gloriously down; thou art the pattern in this imperial school, &c."

Confucius' title and name has been several times changed since his death. It has been customary in China, since the most ancient times, to confer honorary titles (*hoei*) upon departed men, chiefly if they had been distinguished. One of his posthumous titles is—*Ching Siuen Ni Kung*, i.e., the all complete and illustrious Duke of Ni (Ni was the name of a mountain in Lu, on which the mother of Confucius is said to have prayed to God for the birth of a son). The title by which he is known at present is—*Tchi shing sian sse Kung tse*, i.e., the perfect sage, the ancient teacher, Kung tse.

If we ask by what means Confucius has attained in China to the same position which is held in other parts of the world by the founders of religions, we can account for this remarkable fact only by the supposition that he actually has been the best representative of the Chinese mind, the pattern of Chinese wisdom and humanity. Had his sayings and teachings not found an echo in the hearts of the more intelligent and better portion of the Chinese nation, the paramount and almost despotic influence which his doctrines exercised for the last 2,400 years over China would simply be inexplicable.

His teaching did not bear the stamp of novelty. He brought no new theories to light with which to startle the world. He himself said: "I am a transmitter, and not a maker; I believe in and love the ancients." He firmly believed himself to have been commissioned by Heaven to preserve the lore and statutes of the ancient sages, to bring

them into force again, to put a stop to unrighteousness and injustice, and make the Chinese nation once more virtuous, happy and prosperous. He was unceasingly striving to exemplify in his own life what he thought to be the ideal of a perfect man; but he always candidly confessed that he came short in many things, and that his virtue was not perfect. Almost all sayings on his own person show a feeling of great humility; he appears to have been far from any pride. I instance here one of his sayings: "In a hamlet of ten families," says he, "there may always be found one who is as honourable and sincere as Kew (i.e. as I myself) is, but he may not be so fond of learning."

His mental growth he describes in the following remarkable passage: "When I was at the age of fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning; at thirty, I stood firm; at forty, I had no doubts; at fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven; at sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth; at seventy, I could follow what my heart desired without transgressing what was right." He did not boast of learning and knowledge. He once said, like Socrates, "I am not knowing, but if some low person asks anything of me, who am quite empty, I investigate into both his ends (his whole character) and exhaust him, (thus enriching my own knowledge of men)." In the translation of this passage I could not follow Dr. Legge, who is, on the whole, a very trustworthy translator. His translation does not give a good sense; therefore I made one of my own.

Of his divine mission he appears to have been quite convinced. Several passages regarding it have been already

quoted. He expected it would be announced by some miraculous event. Sadly disappointed in his expectation, he once exclaimed, "The Fung bird does not come; the river sends forth no map." (Fung is the Chinese Phœnix. He is said to appear when a sage ascends the throne, or when right principles are going to prevail in the empire. The river and map carry us back to the remotest antiquity. According to Chinese tradition, a dragon-horse, called *Lung-ma*, on whose back white and black points were marked as on a map, appeared to Fuh-hi, the Adam of the Chinese. These white and black points were regarded by the Chinese as a kind of primitive revelation, and form the ground text of their most sacred book, called Y-King.)

Confucius has left no regular system of politics or moral philosophy; we have nothing but scattered sayings of his on these topics. In his discourses on morality, he always drew a strict line of distinction between the *Kiun-tse* and the *Siao-jin*. The *Kiun-tse*, which word means prince, ruler, head of a family or tribe, is, according to him, and all Chinese philosophers after him, a man endowed with superior qualities of mind and heart, who aspires after exemplifying the ideal of humanity. The opposite is the "small or little man" *(siao jin)*, who has no such lofty aspirations, but looks only after his advantage, and cares only for the gratification of his desires. Both are often contrasted by Confucius. He says, and very truly, "the superior man is catholic, and no partisan; the small man is a partisan, and not catholic." "The superior man must be grave," says he in another passage; "if he be not grave, he will not be respected, and his learning will not be solid."

His two chief principles of morality are: sincerity and truthfulness in words, and honesty in actions. These two principles he thought of such importance, that a man, when riding in a carriage, should have them yoked on it as if they were the horses to draw him.

The pursuit of gain for the sake of gain, he treated with utter contempt. Some one asked him once how to get an appointment. He answered: "You should not ask for an appointment, but first qualify yourself for it."

Man must strive to attain to a state of perfect harmony. This is called *Chung-yung*, i.e., the constant mean; only one who has attained to this constant mean is a perfect and complete man and self-content.

The great principle of our conduct towards our fellow men ought to be reciprocity. He expressed it in the following sentence, which, according to the teachings of the sage, is found in several passages of the Analects and the Chung-yung (a little book composed by his grandson); I give it Chinese, in order to give my audience some idea of the structure of the so-called barbarous Chinese language, which shows, however, a high degree of perfection, and is capable of expressing any abstract idea. It runs as follows: "*Shih chu ki eul pu yuan, i fei shih chu jin,*" that is, literally, "Do to yourself, and not wish, also do not to men;" that is, "What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others."

Before I conclude I have to notice some of his sayings on the art of government. He starts, just as Aristotle, from the family. The state is only a large family; the emperor is its father and mother. The first duty, he says, is to make

a district populous; if it has become populous, then government must make them rich; if they have become rich, government is obliged to educate them. For the welfare of a state, he says, three things are required: first, military equipment; secondly, plenty of food for the people; and, thirdly, faith of the people in their ruler. On being questioned which of these three requisites was the most important, he answered, "that people should have faith in their ruler; if people have no faith in their ruler, there is no standing for the state."

He attached the greatest weight to the example set by the governors to the governed; in this respect he was, doubtless, a little too sanguine. "To govern," said he once to the chief of the Ke family, "is to rectify; if you lead on people, so that they become rectified, who will dare not to be correct (in his conduct)?" Of the greatest importance, thought he, to be the appointment of the right man to the right place. According to him, only real men of worth are fit for any higher appointment. He once said to a ruler, "Employ the upright, put aside all the crooked; in this way the crooked can be made to be upright."

He thought very much of observing ceremonial rules, believing them to give men a certain dignity and gravity; however, he regarded their observance only as a secondary point, as a means for obtaining a higher object, viz., to establish man's character.

But it is now time to conclude this lecture by offering some general remarks on the character and personal merits of the sage. As has been the case with almost all men who

acted a prominent part in the world's history, we find on him also various and widely different opinions pronounced. Some make him one of the greatest sages and profoundest thinkers who ever lived. Others try to deprive him even of all moral worth. The judgment pronounced on him by Gützlaff, the late Missionary in China, in his Chinese history, which has been published in Germany about fifteen years ago, falls little short of a libel. Gützlaff makes him a trader in wisdom, who wished to sell his article to the highest bidder. But any attentive and impartial reader of the Analects, in which his character is represented in its true colours, will readily perceive how unjustifiable such an imputation of the lowest motives to the actions of the sage is. Confucius was a perfectly honest and sincere man. He had a firm and established character. Though he was very anxious to find an opportunity to carry his principles of good government into practice, he disdained to take service with mere usurpers, or dissolute and worthless princes, if there was no probability of their being changed by his lessons. It is true, in his great anxiety to be employed by some prince as administrator of a state, he appears to have behaved now and then with too little caution, so that he fell even with some of his contemporaries under the suspicion that he was determined to obtain, at any rate, a suitable appointment. That such an opinion about him must have been very prevalent, we learn from several passages of the Analects. Even a kind of satire on him is recorded in this work. When he was once trying to get an employment in the state of Tsu, a man who passed for mad chanted the following stanza:

"O Fung bird! O Fung bird (Phœnix)!
How has thy virtue suffered!
Let me pass over what is past,
And caution thee for what will come.
Give up, give up thy vain pursuit!
For danger now awaits all men
Who dare to rule a state."

Dr. Legge does the sage more justice than Gützlaff. He does not deny him a certain moral worth, and readily acknowledges his many virtues. But he is, also, not blind to his shortcomings; the idea of Christian love was unknown to him. He thought that kindness should be recompensed with kindness, but evil should be met with justice. However, Dr. Legge does not regard him as a great man. It is true he did not startle the world with new ideas and theories, nor made he his name immortal as inventor or discoverer. He was no genius in the European sense; he was neither a Bacon, nor a Kant, or Schelling, in natural philosophy or metaphysics; but as a moral philosopher, as a teacher of the principles of higher morality, he stands very high, as high as any man of his age could stand. His knowledge of human nature, his capacity of rightly judging of men's character, was astoundingly great. He was great as a teacher, instructor, and scholar; had he not actually been a great man, one never could account for the admiration and awe with which all his pupils (and their number was very large) and the most eminent men of China subsequent to him regarded him. I must leave now the sage, and wish only that my audience may have derived as much pleasure from this feeble sketch of a great man's life and actions as I myself derived from the rather troublesome perusal of his sayings in the Chinese language, which he used as the instrument for expressing to posterity his doctrines of morality and wisdom.

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Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 20 February, 2020